



# Southern blue whiting

A massive year class recruitment in the southern blue whiting fishery around the Bounty Islands has seen the Minister of Fisheries almost triple the fishery's Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the 2008/09 fishing year.

An acoustic survey carried out by industry in 2007 showed that the fish stock was six to seven times larger than the previous fishing year.

The dramatic increase has been attributed to the maturing of the 2002 year class which has now reached an age to join the spawning aggregation. Southern blue whiting typically spawn for the first time when they are three to four-years-old.

Eighty per cent of southern blue whiting taken from the fishery in 2007-08 were from the 2002 year class alone.

The TAC for the fishery has been increased from 3,500 to 10,000 from April this year, with support from industry not to take the TAC any higher at this time.

Southern blue whiting is caught in the sub-Antarctic waters around the Auckland, Bounty and Campbell Islands.

\$14 million dollars worth of southern blue whiting (9,360 tonnes) was exported last year as both surimi and frozen fillets. The majority of the catch goes to China.

"The Industry survey in 2007 was very successful and it shows that the Bounty Island stock is in great shape.

"Responsible management of the stock will ensure that the 2002 year class is the basis of a healthy fishery for years to come," says MFish Senior Fisheries Analyst, Andy Hill.

A large portion of the stock caught over the last decade has come from the Campbell Island stock. This has been the largest stock due, in part, to a very successful spawning in 1991.

